National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Mercury, climate and the food web

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Abstract:

Writing in Environmental Health Perspectives (2005), Booth and Zeller [hereafter BZ05] embark on the highly ambitious task of applying ecosystem modeling to the difficult problem of tracing the flow of methylmercury (MeHg) - the biologically active potentially toxic form of mercury - in the Faroe Island marine ecosystem as changing functions of both fish mortality (commercial catch rates) and climate. ne paper further attempts to estimate weekly MeHg intake by the Faroese from consumption of mainly pilot whale meat and codfish - two key sources of MeHg exposures in Faroese diets. BZ05 displays the risk inherent in favoring computer modeling results over real world data. Such an exercise, increasingly common and problematic in climate science, often produces tenuous outcomes. More specifically, Booth and Zeller, with their minimal "what if" modeling efforts, cobble together a grab-bag of speculative assertions, problematic statements, harm attributions and over-reaching conclusions.

Source: Ask your librarian to help locate this item.

Resource Description

Communication: M

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience: M

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker, Public

Exposure : M

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Food/Water Quality

Food/Water Quality: Chemical

Geographic Feature: M

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

Geographic Location: ☑

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Europe

European Region/Country: European Country

Other European Country : Denmark

Health Impact: ☑

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Neurological Effect

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☑

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: ☑

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Children, Elderly, Pregnant Women, Racial/Ethnic Subgroup

Other Racial/Ethnic Subgroup: Faroe Islanders

Other Vulnerable Population: Subsistence fishers

Resource Type: ☑

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

Timescale: ☑

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment: ☑

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content